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America for Americans Only:
Gino C. Speranza and the Immigrant Experience

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Gino Carlo Speranza, lawyer, journalist, and author, remains one of the most controversial Italian Americans in American history. During the Progressive Era, he emerged as an ardent advocate of Italians and other immigrants and a leading defender of the melting-pot ideal.[1] Later, in the 1920s, when a virulent nativism beset the nation, Speranza unexpectedly became a militant proponent of both restrictive legislation and militant Americanization. In that decade his writings provided a powerful and reactionary justification to limit immigration to the United States.

Gino Speranza was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1872, the son of Carlo Leonardo Speranza and Adele Capetti.[2] His parents, members of the refined bourgeoisie of Verona, Italy, had immigrated to America in 1868, long before the mass influx of southern Italian immigrants and the establishment of the "Italian colonies" that later so disturbed native-stock Americans. Carlo Speranza, a noted authority on Dante, soon distinguished himself as a professor of Italian literature at Columbia University. Given a largely American and affluent upbringing, Gino Speranza assimilated easily, rarely experiencing any conflict between his ethnicity and his Americanism. Educated mostly in New York City's public schools, Speranza eventually graduated from the City College of New York in 1892. Two years later, after receiving a law degree from New York University Law School, he began practicing law in New York City.

Speranza came of age when millions of Europeans, mostly from Italy, Russia, and Eastern Europe, were emigrating to America in search of economic opportunity and freedom from religious and political oppression. To anxious Americans these immigrants were much more alien in appearance, language, and behavior than the Irish, the Germans, and the Scandinavians who had earlier composed the immigrant stream. Often illiterate, unskilled, and impoverished, the newcomers were viewed with fear by Americans as incapable of assimilat-

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ing to the dominant Anglo-American culture. Between 1900 and 1917, the Progressive movement, a dynamic and sweeping expression of liberalism, tried to promote the economic and cultural integration of the immigrants who toiled in America's mills, mines, and sweatshops. Despite his Italian background, Gino Speranza proved to be an important intellectual influence on that movement. Indeed, he played a prominent role among ethnic reformers who defended the melting-pot image of America as a nation capable of assimilating various ethnic groups, helping in the process to mollify the legacy of racism and nativism in American society.

Speranza carried out that role as an expert on Italian immigrants and a supporter of efforts for their assimilation. Owing to his extensive knowledge of both international law and Italian culture, Speranza became legal counselor to the Italian Royal Consulate-General in New York in 1897. He was a founder and first secretary of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, which was located in lower Manhattan.[3] Mainly in these capacities, Speranza strove to prevent the exploitation of the Italian immigrant working class, whose lowly condition many Americans regarded with open contempt. As a second-generation ethnic, Speranza became a cultural interpreter or mediator because he felt compelled to resolve the conflict between opposing cultures which brought him such emotional pain. Generally, this errand of cultural conciliation was familiar to the children of working-class Italian immigrants, who often explained the ways of American culture to their parents. Speranza, however, rarely had any need to define America to his already Americanized parents. Instead, his task as a cultural interpreter was the broader, yet more abstract and impersonal one, of explaining Italian immigrants and their culture to Americans.

Although knowledgeable about Italian immigrant culture, Speranza was more intimately connected to middle-class American culture. Thus, he did not have a profound interest in preserving and strengthening the ethnic culture he tried to define. Like many native-stock reformers, Speranza sought instead to impose upon southern Italian immigrants and their children a version of "true" Americanism as he understood it. This Americanism, defined as the melting-pot ideal, was supposedly comprehensible to all nationalities, races, and classes, but it was middle class in spirit and practice. Speranza feared the potential of excessive immigration to "modify the essential elements" of the Anglo-Saxon stock, particularly "that part of it which

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directs social movements."[4]

Speranza differed, however, from many native-stock reformers in one important aspect. Although a champion of the melting-pot idea, he was ambivalent about overly excessive demands to impose cultural or Anglo-American conformity on Italians and other immigrants. When he did stress conformity, it was usually in economic and political, and not primarily in cultural, terms. He wanted all immigrants to have a decent standard of living and to be loyal to the nation's democratic principles, which, of course, meant a rejection of radicalism and ethnocentric politics. His liberal Americanism, or world view, tolerated cultural diversity and sought to lessen the conflict and divisions that total enforced conformity might engender. In the long run, however, he believed that most cultural differences would eventually become unimportant or even disappear as Americans grew more alike.[5]

Looking back now Speranza's ideas appear rather simplistic. Yet they evolved naturally from his generally unburdened integration into the American middle class, which had a profound impact on his future as a social reformer. On the one hand, as the son of immigrants, he was sympathetic to the difficulties encountered by Italian immigrants and their children when trying to assimilate. For this reason, he condoned many aspects of cultural diversity. On the other hand, because his own assimilation had proven relatively effortless, he possessed a somewhat overly optimistic view of the capacity of others to assimilate in a similar fashion. Obviously, the average working-class child of Italian immigrants rarely had the same type of opportunities to achieve the American dream and simultaneously retain their cultural heritage as did Speranza.

Prior to World War I, Speranza seemed unaware of any possible limitations in his philosophy of liberal Americanism. By fusing cultural diversity with political and economic unity, he hoped to foster cooperation between the many ethnic groups that constituted American society. It was this hope that formed the focus of his efforts for Italian immigrants. Because in his judgment Italians and their children labored under enormous handicaps in America, he wanted a "sympathetic spirit" to infuse the assimilation aimed at them. Americans had to abandon their innate prejudices towards Italians and practice a policy of assimilation that he defined as a "dual process of forces interacting one upon the other." Most Italians, he argued, saw only "the worst element of Americanism," and it was up to the native

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stock to show them America's best side. But he also stressed that Americanization of Italians did not mean forcing them "to give up the good Italian qualities." Speranza nevertheless pinned most of his hopes on the children of immigrants and appealed to Americans to judge Italians not by the first generation but by the second. The key, as he saw it, was to teach the children to love America without demanding that they should forget their parents' culture.[6]

In his early writings for the New York *Evening Post,* Speranza often exhibited a sensible understanding of Italian immigrant culture. He was equally at home describing the hardships of life for "tired, unwashed laborers" and "proud but simple hearted" construction workers, as he was at portraying an imperious music professor forced to make a living by tutoring American children. Because middle-class Americans read his articles, Speranza strove to raise their empathy for Italians and to combat the image of them as either criminals or radicals. He did so mostly by lauding the "patient, industrious and economical" lifestyles of the immigrants that made them "indispensable to the development of this country." He credited their continued success to the "sheer triumph of individual initiative and tireless energy," the type of qualities most Americans applauded, and which Speranza considered "a worthy element for our composite Americanism."[7]

He disapproved of Americans who defined Italians and other immigrants solely as a "national problem" or a "national peril." Such an attitude, he cautioned, obstructed assimilation. Instead, Americans needed to uplift the foreign born by improving their living standards and by protecting them from abuse. To help Italian immigrants adjust, Speranza worked through the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants to end overcrowding in the ghettoes and reduce overwork for women, which, in his opinion, were destroying family life and obstructing assimilation. He directed the Society's successful efforts to protect unsuspecting newcomers from confidence artists at Ellis Island and also its failed attempt to establish and sustain a labor bureau intended to lessen the influence of the *padroni,* or labor contractors, among unskilled workers. The Society also promoted the rural settlement of Italian immigrants, because Speranza believed that the problem of immigration was not one "of restriction, but of distribution." Although these resettlement programs had little success, he backed them with the argument that city streets "can make no man love America; but a farm, however small, makes for citizenship." This statement demonstrates how deeply a man, whose lineage traces back to

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the most prominent families in the Veneto and Lombardy, had imbibed the Jeffersonian faith in the liberating power of the land.[8]

But like many people of northern Italian descent, Speranza often betrayed a tendency to view southern Italian immigrants as "ignorant," "childlike," and "highly impressionable," and therefore incapable of self-direction. He scoffed at Italian immigrant aid societies for duplicating the "moral disunity" of southern Italian society by organizing along village or town lines. Indeed, for immigrant societies to be effective "instruments of assimilation," they had to shed their foreign characteristics. Even when he complimented these societies for the good they sometimes achieved, little doubt existed in his mind that he preferred the immigrant aid societies founded and operated by middle-class reformers and philanthropists.[9] As a member of the first generation of reform experts, and an ethnic minority within it, Speranza could not have behaved much differently. As a reformer, he was indebted to the American elites who controlled and funded the organizations with which he was associated. Trained by middle-class academics, he had learned the importance of rendering social reform through such agencies of the cultural mainstream. So like many middle-class reformers, he disapproved of aid societies controlled solely by the immigrant leaders of ethnic neighborhoods.[10] As might be expected, the *prominenti* of the Italian colony in New York City refused to recognize Speranza's leadership and resisted his reforms as an undue interference, for in their view he represented only the elite segment of the Italian community.

Whatever his middle-class limitations as a defender of the melting-pot ideal, Speranza usually remained confident that America's political and social institutions could somehow absorb the mass of newcomers arriving by the millions. His optimism largely mirrored the mood of the country during most of the Progressive Era. During those years Americans extolled the power of their democratic ideology to transform all people, no matter from what far corners of the globe they came. At first few critics of note effectively challenged this breezy cultural enthusiasm, for all conflict somehow appeared amenable to the ministrations of reform. Even nativists who grieved over the "dangers" of mass immigration proved unable to make any inroads in weakening this sense of assurance.

Before long, however, the nativist movement regrouped and claimed additional followers in reaction to the rising tide of "new" immigrants. Two serious economic recessions also plagued the nation

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in the decade before World War I. When unemployment rose during hard times, native-stock workers feared competing with low-skilled and poorly-paid immigrant workers for scarce jobs.[11] As pressure to impose restrictive measures mounted from the Immigration Restriction League, the American Federation of Labor, advocates of eugenics, and anti-immigrant legislators, Gino Speranza, like many other Progressive reformers, began to reflect the nation's growing doubts and concerns about the cultural integration of the Latin, Slavic, and Jewish newcomers.

In his writings just prior to World War I, Speranza began to emphasize more forcefully his belief that America was a nation based on Anglo-Saxon culture and political ideology. Although he did not regard Anglo-Saxon culture as superior to others, he did state that representative government was inherently an English development of "centuries of training and struggle" that few other cultures had effectively imitated. Convinced that political traditions functioned best in homogeneous cultures, which had little ethnic or racial strife, he expressed concern that mass immigration, combined with a falling birth rate among the native stock, might threaten America's political and cultural unity. Speranza nevertheless had faith in programs of Americanization that would reduce the influence of foreign cultures, and he continued to implore Americans to treat immigrants in a brotherly way and by the dictates of the Golden Rule.[12]

Yet pessimism over the results of Americanization had crept into his thinking in the years just before the war . Although certain old world traits like "thrift," "patience," and a loathing for "mere material possessions" surely made the foreigner an asset to American life, Speranza still perceived him as a "misfit" who had to be fitted into the social and political system. The sheer numbers of impressionable immigrants, many of whom were susceptible to the appeals of passionate radicals, made this fitting-in-process much more difficult. To protect the nation's political institutions, Speranza recommended that the foreign born serve a long apprenticeship before naturalization. The period of apprenticeship would identify those immigrants who displayed "a tendency, and an aspiration for our institutions and ideals" and weed out those who did not. On the eve of World War I, he proposed a fifteen-year apprenticeship as appropriate, with shorter periods for those who performed public service or who acquired special education. Despite his misgivings regarding immigrants, Speranza did not endorse restrictive legislation because he still regarded immigration as

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a "natural phenomenon" caused by economic forces in both America and Europe. In his opinion, immigration was a temporary problem that would eventually fade away when the nation would "cease needing it." Still, his complaints revealed a growing fear of diversity and his troubling wartime experiences would soon turn him against open immigration altogether.[13]

During World War I, Gino Speranza and other social reformers faced a serious challenge to their vision of the melting-pot ideal. In those years, the nation's military intervention against the Central Powers sparked anti-immigrant feelings that intensified and reached a peak during the Red Scare. As American soldiers battled German militarism abroad, native-stock Americans began to question the patriotism of Americans of German ancestry on the home front. Eventually that fear of German-American disloyalty combined with a suspicion of alien radicalism during the Red Scare came to turn many Americans against the policy of gradual assimilation. A militant Americanization movement arose that tried to enforce cultural conformity among ethnic Americans. Afterward, in the early 1920s, an even more malignant nativism menaced the melting pot. While the earlier anti-hyphenate crusade had focused on suppressing so-called disloyal and radical aliens, the nativists of the early 1920s wanted to impose racial controls by limiting the admission of immigrants whom they viewed as incapable of assimilating to the dominant Anglo-American society. As this anti-immigrant hostility flourished, it eventually resulted in the passage of restrictive legislation based on discriminatory racial quotas.

The course of these events deeply influenced and ultimately altered Gino Speranza from a compassionate spokesman for immigrants to a defender of nativism. The odyssey that transformed Speranza from an ally of immigrants into their enemy was a long and tormented one. In 1914, Speranza, sickly since his youth, abandoned his arduous legal career to become a journalist. Soon after, he travelled to Italy as a war correspondent for the New York *Evening Post* and the *Outlook.* As he embarked on his new occupation, Speranza was expressing ever-increasing doubts about immigrants in America. Writing to the *New York Times,* he professed an anxiety over the "large migratory currents" of people the war had set loose. Certain that upon the war's end a mass migration of displaced persons would inundate the United States, he warned that depending on immigration as a source of wealth was an "extremely haphazard" undertaking, and he suggested that the nation find an alternative to it.[14]

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Briefly Speranza's old optimism about immigrants returned as his experiences in Italy buoyed his spirits. He gained renewed respect for immigrants when he met Italian Americans fighting in the Italian army. Surprised by their courage and continued allegiance to America, he wrote in his diary for 12 August 1915: "Yesterday, these young men were solving the problems of industrial America; today, they are going to fight the battle of freedom in Europe: tomorrow, perhaps, they will police the peace of the world." In an article for the *Outlook,* he informed his readers that these soldiers were fighting for American ideals. He announced that their actions had convinced him that character was the true test of citizenship and not racial or ethnic traits. As late as May 1918, the love these soldiers expressed for America, their new "*patria*," had so deeply affected him that he joyfully proclaimed that their spirit echoed the "hopes and the vision" of the founding fathers. That spirit was "America's reward for offering to every humble, adventurous soul the longed-for opportunity" of a "home and a refuge." He boasted that the "spiritual revolution" America had wrought among these Italian Americans marked the end of the old notion of "loyalty to a racial group."[15]

Upon the end of the war in 1918 and the subsequent Peace Conference, however, Speranza's mood darkened and despair overtook him again. A dedicated Wilsonian liberal in international affairs, he became a target of steady criticism from Italians who resented the Allies' attempts to deprive Italy of the Adriatic port of Fiume. Confused by the outbreak of postwar nationalism in Italy and elsewhere that threatened the Wilsonian world order, Speranza grew disillusioned. He became convinced that essential differences existed between America and Italy, and, indeed, the rest of the world. American nationalism, with its commitment to democracy and rule of law, was distinct if not unique compared to destructive European nationalisms.[16]

In 1919, Gino Speranza returned home amid the furor over the peace treaty and the Red Scare. These events and his observations in Europe persuaded him that foreigners imperiled American democracy. In the early 1920s, Speranza wrote a series of very influential and controversial articles for the *World's Work* and other distinctly anti-immigrant magazines, which were later compiled in the book *Race or Nation,* in which he argued that immigrants were poisoning America's social, political, and economic institutions and hence had to be restricted. Although Speranza never appeared before any congressional commit-

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tee on immigration as a witness, his writings provided restrictionists and their political allies a compelling and forceful argument in their behalf. For here was a prominent Italian American lawyer and reformer claiming that southern and eastern Europeans were incapable of becoming true Americans. [17]

Speranza now concluded that America was not a nation of immigrants, but an Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation which had formed its basic political and social characteristics in the early years of its existence. Thus Americanism was a cultural product of a particular race and nationality, not an ideology understandable to all of an economic standard attainable by many, as he had once believed. The Anglo-Saxon heritage rested on a belief in self-government and the rule of law. American democracy was a "single consciousness" developed by Anglo-Saxons who thought alike, and so it functioned best when there was a "likeness of mind" among as many people as possible. The "race invasion" of "new" immigrants, whose political and cultural background differed from the original American stock, endangered that democracy. As their numbers swelled and as they gathered in their separate "colonies or ghettoes," these aliens became "racially conscious" and more difficult to assimilate into the dominant culture.[18]

All hopes Speranza once held for assimilation had disappeared. Assimilation at best produced, he declared, only a superficial Americanism that failed to teach immigrants to think and act like Anglo-Saxons, who had taken several centuries to develop their own peculiar culture and politics. So any attempt to Americanize the foreign born too quickly threatened social stability by making citizens out of people who lacked the necessary qualities of Anglo-Saxonism. Indeed, Americanization was nothing but "sheer superstition and, as such, the child of ignorance." Immigrants could not discard or adopt racial traits that simply. Instead, those traits were "transmitted from generation to generation" with little change.[19] As proof of his contention, Speranza pointed to the stubborn persistence of nationalism among immigrants during the war and to the growth of cultural pluralism as an ideology among "new stock" intellectuals.[20]

Wherever Speranza looked he now saw the pernicious influence of alien cultures. These influences endangered the "spiritual homogeneity" of the country, which he defined as an endearing faith in self-reliance, the "keystone" of American civilization. Self-reliance was a Puritan or frontier trait that the newer immigrants, mostly Jews and Catholics, lacked because they came from cultures based on deference

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to authority. These immigrants, moreover, had emigrated after the closing of the frontier, so they could not possibly gain the trait through exposure to the American environment as it now existed. Speranza maintained that the foreign born did not threaten American society because they were inferior, but because they and their ways differed "in varying degrees from those of the American people." Nativism, or "social ostracism," was nothing more than a defensive reaction by Americans to what they perceived as "alien aggressiveness." To prevent racial conflict, the development of a caste system, or the "mongrelizing of the races," as he put it, Speranza called for a "whole-souled return to and conformity with the historic principles and ideas of American life and American civilization."[21]

To accomplish these ends, he proposed an end to immigration and a twenty-year residency requirement for naturalization. Besides recommending the establishment of English as the national language, Speranza promoted a literacy qualification for voting or holding office, a universal public-school system, compulsory education for adult aliens and their children, and the abolition of foreign-language instruction in the public schools. He also called for the registration of all aliens, the implementation of a racial census or survey, and the enactment of laws to investigate, supervise, and even suppress foreign-language newspapers and other societies that promoted ethnic separatism. Finally, he appealed for the breaking up of ethnic enclaves and the repudiation by immigrants of any loyalty to their former homelands.[22]

In his *Race or Nation,* Speranza challenged foreign-stock citizens to aid him in his quest for "conformity to the American spirit" as a sacrificial act of "self-effacement." Self-effacement was putting it mildly. What Speranza was really demanding was unconditional surrender on the part of ethnic Americans to a program of cultural regimentation.[23] Yet Speranza's writings only scratched the surface of the deep bigotry that had by then become embedded in his soul. His private correspondence revealed an even more malicious streak. Rather than reformers and social workers, most of his correspondents now consisted of nativists, restrictionists, and racists, who were mostly middle-class Anglo-Saxon Americans. In addition, his letters betrayed a growing paranoia. He now condoned restricting the immigrant franchise because he believed that foreigners were "actively engaged in demolishing American democracy." Fearing the ethnic domination of national politics, he suggested that it might be a good idea for the western

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and southern Democrats to expel the northeastern faction, a "destructible element," if they wished to remain an American party. He gave special condemnation to the cultural pluralists, who he claimed were aggressively attempting to "impose upon the American people...their interpretation of American history."[24]

Moreover, Speranza, a Roman Catholic by birth but not habit, now displayed a caustic anti-Catholicism.[25] Catholics, he charged, could not possibly fit into an Anglo-Saxon Protestant democracy because their religion marked them as un-American. If Catholics continued to exert pressure on the culture, he envisioned an "unavoidable reaction" on the part of the Protestant majority. But he levelled his sharpest attacks on Jews. "On the whole," he wrote, "as regards the danger of the [Catholic] Church in this country, I think all that is necessary is to keep alive the natural Nordic suspicion against it and to keep down the Irish birth rate...But the real fight, endless and uncompromising, is against the Jew."[26] Not surprisingly, he also found affinity with the Ku Klux Klan. In 1926, one year before he died of pleurisy at age fifty-five, he praised the "good work" of the "organized new Klan." Although not a Klan member, he declared himself "in sympathy with anyone engaged in that fight [against the immigrant] be he saint or devil."[27]

What had changed Gino Speranza from a friend of the immigrant to a man whom Louis Marshall scored as a "renegade Italian who for some years past had befouled his own nest"?[28] Surely it was more than a simple loss of faith in Wilsonian liberalism or anger at postwar ethnic nationalism that created his virulent bigotry. For although many ethnic-stock reformers found their liberalism sorely tested during the intolerant 1920s, few reacted as drastically as did Gino Speranza in both principle and practice.[29] Yet because Speranza remained silent about the reasons for his transformation, its causes can only be surmised.[30]

In an extreme fashion, Speranza represented the dilemma of the second-generation American reformer in the 1920s. Growing up he assimilated easily, mostly untroubled by the burdens of ethnicity. Raised as a solid middle-class citizen, he respected American democracy and all it symbolized. In contrast with many immigrant children, he had experienced neither marginalization because of his ethnicity nor felt the pain of social rejection.[31] Instead, Speranza had always moved in a tight-knit circle of cultivated friends, somewhat shielded from the harsher aspects of life in America. His wife, Florence Colgate, was a wealthy heiress, and many of his closest friends were middle-class

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Americans. As a result, Speranza never developed a deep-rooted understanding of southern Italians and other immigrants. Even as an advocate of Italian immigrants, his sympathetic attitude toward the foreign born masked an aloofness and paternalism common to middle-class reformers.[32]

Because the ties to Speranza's ethnic heritage were so loosely bound, they unravelled easily under pressure during the 1920s. That is the reason Speranza's earlier optimism towards immigrants withered when it encountered the potent nativism of that decade. His version of the melting pot was illusory, as many Americans denounced the foreign born as disloyal and undesirable. They also accused many respected reformers of radicalism for promoting reforms once considered mainstream politics. After successfully preaching the gospel of liberal Americanism for so long, Speranza risked becoming increasingly marginal both professionally and intellectually in the face of such racism and reaction. This ambiguous status proved traumatic to his sense of self, and when confronted with the nativist and conservative backlash, he recoiled from his reformist Americanism. Frightened that the clash between ethnics and nativists might reflect negatively on his own status, Speranza clearly sided with that part of his heritage which he felt most comfortable. So he rejected his Italian ancestry to become an American ethnic chauvinist.

In retrospect, Speranza's response to the threat of marginality seems so irrational that it borders on the pathological. Yet like many second-generation ethnics, Speranza dreaded being rejected by native-stock Americans and sentenced to a life on the periphery of society. In Speranza's case, a lifetime of economic and social success was imperiled by his former reputation as an ardent defender of Italians and other immigrants, most of whom were now vilified as social pariahs by many Americans. But rather than project his anger against the majority, which had afforded him a measure of social acceptance, Speranza directed it at immigrants by blaming them for the putative decline in traditional American values. This argument clearly appealed to native Americans who saw their way of life threatened by urban and ethnic cultures. For Speranza it functioned as a form of public contrition, his *own* sacrificial act of "self-effacement," enabling him to shed all connections to his ethnic heritage and liberalism and secure his position in mainstream society.[33] Yet by adopting such a contemptuous philosophy and by rejecting the role of cultural mediator, Speranza was cutting himself off emotionally from the liberal social

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ideal that had shaped his entire career. In doing so, he emboldened racist and reactionary forces and thereby sullied his one-time honorable reputation as an eloquent defender of the melting pot and the American dream.

NOTES

[1]This article is adapted from my doctoral thesis "Defining the American Dream: The Children of Immigrants as Social Reformers, 1900-1929" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Connecticut, 1993). I wish to thank A. William Hoglund of the University of Connecticut, Gabor Vermes of Rutgers University, and the late George E. Pozzetta of the University of Florida for their advice and criticism.

[2]For biographical information, see Arthur Livingston, "Introduction" in Gino Speranza, *The Diary of Gino Speranza, Italy, 1915-1919,* Vol. I, ed. Florence Colgate Speranza (New York, 1941), ix-xiii; Olga Peragallo, *Italian-American Authors and Their Contribution to American Literature* (New York, 1949), 202-05; George E. Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza: Reform and the Immigrant," in David R. Colburn and George E. Pozzetta, eds., *Reform and Reformers in the Progressive Era* (Westport, 1983), 47-70; Luciano J. Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello, *The Italian Americans,* (New York, 1971), 100-105.

[3]Founded in 1901, the Society drew its financial support mainly from native-stock American philanthropists and the Italian government. See Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza," 52.

[4]Gino Speranza, "Racial Hygiene in the U.S.," *Survey,* 30 (30 Aug. 1913), 660.

[5]Many second-generation ethnic reformers during the Progressive Era shared this generally hopeful view of the ability of various ethnic groups to live together in harmony while they maintained a fair amount of their cultural distinctiveness, even if only temporarily. Two other prominent Italian American reformers with similar attitudes were immigrant advocate Antonio Mangano and educator Angelo Patri. For further details see Salerno, "Defining the American Dream,' 131-191.

[6]Arthur Livingston, "Introduction" xii; Gino Speranza, "The Influence of America on the Italian Immigrant," 1-10 n.d., Gino Speranza Collection, New York City Public Library, box 35; "How It Feels to Be a Problem," in Lydio Tomasi, ed., *Italians in America* (New York, 1978), 120; and "Solving the Immigration Problem," *Outlook,* 76 (16 Apr. 1904), 933.

[7]Gino Speranza, "The Marionette Theater," New York Evening Post, 23 Mar. 1901, Speranza MSS, scrapbook, Vol. I; "Signor Ettore," New York *Evening Post,* 2 Feb 1901, ibid.; "The Aspirations of Tony," New York *Evening Post,* n.d., ibid.; "The Italian Emigrant," New York *Evening Post,* 9 May 1901, ibid.; and, "The Italian Foreman as a Social Agent," in Tomasi, *Italians in America,* 257.

[8]Gino Speranza, "Solving the Immigrant Problem," 924-30; "How It Feels," 119; "Italians in Congested Districts," in Tomasi, *Italians in America,* 238-40; "The Problem of Immigration Is Only One of Distribution," *Sunday News,* 23 Feb. 1902, Speranza MSS, scrapbook, Vol. I; and "Italian Farmers in the South," in Tomasi, *Italians in America,* 250; Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza," 53-57; "Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale, *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience* (New York, 1992), 118-19.

[9]Gino Speranza, "Solving the Immigrant Problem," 930-32; and "Many Societies of the Italian Colony," *New York Times,* 8 Mar. 1903, 34; Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza," 58.

[10]Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza," 51, 57. For discussions of the interaction between Progressive reformers and immigrant leaders see Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migration That Made America* (New York, 1951), 219, 252-54;

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John Higham, "Leadership" in Stephan Thernstrom et al., eds., *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, 1980), 642-47 passim; Victor Greene, *American Immigrant Leaders, 1800-1910* (Baltimore, 1987), 13-16; Riva Lissak, *Pluralism and the Progressives* (Chicago, 1989), 38.

[11]John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, 1955), 162-65.

[12]Gino Speranza, "Decline of Criminal Jurisprudence in America," *Popular Science,* 56 (Feb. 1900), 466; "Racial Hygiene," 660; "Alien in Relation to Our Laws," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences,* 52 (Mar. 1914), 175; and an unpublished handwritten article about a literacy test bill, Speranza MSS, box 35, folder 1.

[13]Gino Speranza, "The New Spirit of Immigration," n.d. [ca. 1914], 19-22, and "Strife Due to Immigrants," n.d. [ca. 1914], 169-72, Speranza MSS, box 35.

[14]Gino Speranza, Letter entitled "Freakish Human Tides Produced by War," to *New York Times,* 22 June 1915, Speranza MSS, scrapbook, Vol. 3.

[15]Gino Speranza, Diary, Vol. I, 102, 164-65; "*Americani* in Italy at War," *Outlook,* 112 (12 Apr. 1916), 861-63; and "Heart's Allegiance," ibid., 119 (15 May 1918), 105.

[16]Livingston, in Gino Speranza, *Diary,* Vol. I, xv-xix; Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza," 62.

[17]Robert A. Divine, in his study of American immigration policy, concludes that Speranza provided the "most complete application of the new racial ideas" to the debate on immigration, one which merged "racist theory with the nationalist fervor of the postwar period." He credits Speranza with fashioning a "new concept, racial nationalism, which was to be reiterated constantly by the Congressional advocates of restriction." Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (New Haven, 1957), 13-14; see also Thomas Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York, 1983), 171; and Peragallo, 204-05.

[18]Gino Speranza, *Race or Nation: A Conflict of Divided Loyalties* (Indianpolis, 1923), 13-28 passim; and "Deeper Misgivings," *Atlantic Monthly,* 129 (June 1922), 766.

[19]Ironically, Horace Kallen made the same point to validate his theory of cultural pluralism. Yet Kallen believed that ethnic groups could remain separate and still cooperate in peace. Speranza, however, called for total amalgamation or expulsion. See Horace Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York, 1924), 176-229 passim.

[20]Gino Speranza to Mrs. Towson, 24 Feb. 1920, and to Rev. C.L. McKee, 7 Jan. 1924, Speranza MSS, box 10; Gino Speranza, *Race or Nation,* 31-33; "Does Americanization Americanize?" *Atlantic Monthly,* 125 (Feb. 1920), 264-69; "Where Americanization Gets Rubbed Off," *Outlook,* 132 (6 Sep. 1922), 28; and "Italian Contrasts," *Yale Review,* 10 (Apr. 1924), 469-74.

[21]Gino Speranza, *Race or Nation,* 31-254 passim; "Religion of American Democracy," *Forum,* 76 (Dec. 1926), 904-11; Livingston in Gino Speranza, *Diary,* Vol. I, xxiii-xxiv.

[22]Gino Speranza, *Race or Nation,* 258-62.

[23]Ibid., 263. By the mid-1920s, Speranza's Wilsonian idealism had also vanished. He now found much to admire in Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime. Fascism's "huge task of economic and spiritual national reconstruction" had, Speranza said, reawakened a sense of "race and nationality" in Italians that transcended class and politics. Fascism opposed the "benevolent philosophy of Woodrow Wilson [and] the material sophistry of Lenin," both of which were worn-out philosophical doctrines that now lacked the power to stir men. See Gino Speranza, "New Italian Renaissance," *Outlook,* 133 (21 Feb. 1923), 351. Of course, Benito Mussolini's Fascist government was praised by many Americans at that time, among them Ida Tarbell, Lothrop Stoddard, Samuel McClure, Charles Beard, and Lincoln Steffens, for supposedly restoring order and efficiency to Italian government and society. Steffens, who once referred to Mussolini as the "divine dictator," admired the Fascist leader as a "will-

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ful man of action," who like Lenin, had shown "broken" liberals like himself that democracy was not needed to achieve economic change. Other liberals, including Oswald Villard, Herbert Croly, William Allen White, and Louis Marshall, however, were ardent critics of fascism. See Lincoln Steffens, *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*, Vol. II (New York, 1931), 813-18; and "Stop, Look, Listen," *Survey*, 57 (1 Mar. 1927), 735-37, 754.

[24]Gino Speranza to Burton J. Hendrick, 1 Jan. 1924, and to A. C. Bedfor, 12 Jan. 1924, Speranza MSS, box 10; Gino Speranza to Talcott M. Banks, 22 Nov. 1924, Speranza MSS, box 11.

[25]Speranza once referred to himself as a "born-Catholic" but a "non-communicant free lance sort of a born-Catholic." Gino Speranza to Emma Brace, 2 Feb. 1904, Speranza MSS, box 1.

[26]Gino Speranza to Arthur W. Page, 31 Jan. 1924, Speranza MSS, box 10; Gino Speranza to Henry Leach, 21 Jan. 1926, and to John Jay Chapman, 8 Dec. 1925, Speranza MSS, box 11.

[27]Gino Speranza to Talcott M. Banks, 11 Mar. 1926, and to Mrs. Morrow, 24 Jan. 1926, Speranza MSS, box 11.

[28]Louis Marshall quoted in Morton Rosenstock, *Louis Marshall: Defender of Jewish Rights* (Detroit, 1965), 222.

[29]My case study of fifty children of immigrants active in social reform during the Progressive Era showed that the majority held on to their liberalism and chose to reaffirm or defend the melting pot during the 1920s. Others tried to improve or reinterpret liberal Americanism through the theory of cultural pluralism. See Salerno, "Defining the American Dream," 264-369 passim.

[30]An exhaustive search of both Speranza's writings and private correspondence revealed no personal statement explaining his extraordinary intellectual conversion. See also Pozzetta, "Gino C. Speranza," 64.

[31]Discussions of the second generation and the concept of marginality can be found in Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (Chicago, 1925), 61, 308; Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *American Journal of Sociology*, 33 (May 1928), 883-93; Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago, 1928), 73, 110, 284, 290; Everett V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Cultural Conflict* (New York, 1937; 2nd ed., 1961), 2-3, 88, 96-101, 122-222; William C. Smith, *Americans in the Making: The Natural History of the Assimilation of Immigrants* (New York, 1939), 229-73; Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts: Selected Papers on Group Dynamics* (New York, 1948), 192-95; Victor R. Greene, *American Immigrant Leaders: Marginality and Identity* (Baltimore, 1987), 2-15; Victor Montalto, *A History of the Intercultural Educational Movement, 1924-1941* (New York, 1982), 37-50.

[32]An interesting comparison can be drawn between Speranza and his contemporary Fiorello La Guardia. While growing up in Arizona, La Guardia, the son of lower-middle class Italians, had felt the sting of what it meant to be called a "dago" or a "wop." After his father's premature death, the family eventually returned to New York's Lower East Side, where La Guardia's exposure to workers, labor leaders, and radicals nurtured his appreciation of immigrant cultures. As a result, La Guardia developed a more intimate and humane view of Italians and other immigrants than Speranza. Fiorello La Guardia, *The Making of an Insurgent* (Philadelphia, 1948), passim; Andrew Rolle, *The Italian-Americans: Troubled Roots* (New York, 1980), 141-46.

[33]Social scientists have identified such behavior on the part of persecuted or marginal individuals as a form of self-hatred. The concept is explored in Kurt Lewin's, "Self-Hatred Among Jews," in *Resolving Social Conflicts*, 145-193.

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